

Remarks:

Claims 1, 4-9, and 17-20 remain in this case, claims 17-20 having been added by this Amendment. All claims stand rejected. This Amendment accompanies a Request for Continued Examination.

In the subject Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9 as obvious over Schubert in view of Walsh. The Examiner took the position that Schubert teaches all of the features of claim 1, except for the wall defining apertures and lights directed to each of the wagering locations. Claim 1 has been amended to more distinctly claim the present invention by clarifying that the platform is adjacent to the wagering locations.

Walsh describes a security system that monitors gambling patrons and gambling activity on the table. Walsh describes and pictures the cushioned rail around the perimeter of the gaming table as the area where security lights and cameras could be placed. However, unlike in the present invention, Schubert describes and shows cameras located under a chip rack near the dealer. Schubert's reference to a rail or ridge is referring to the cushioned rail or ridge around the arcuate part of the table, as is described by Walsh. However, neither Walsh nor Schubert addresses, describes, or shows a platform extending from the cushioned rail along the arcuate wall adjacent to the betting locations where the cameras and lighting are placed underneath. The platform of the present invention is the only way to assure that the cameras and lights have an unobstructed view along the arcuate part of the table and are in close proximity to each betting location. The intensity and consistency of the light source upon the chips is critical in accurately determining the wager from the picture of the chip stack. Schubert does not discuss lighting or illuminating the chip stack which is, again, essential for accurate image bet recognition.

With Walsh, a player's hands, chips, drinks or other personal items could block the lighting and the camera's view. The platform offers patrons a flat surface where the above mentioned items can be placed and not block the cameras or lights. Therefore if a platform could somehow be construed from Walsh or Schubert, it must position the cameras near the dealer and not adjacent to the betting locations in order to have an unobstructed view of the wagering locations. This adjacent

platform and lights are critical for the accuracy of the bet tracking system and not obvious to an artisan of skill in this art.

Further, Walsh is directed to a light fixture position in the cushion or arcuate mount above a gaming table with decorative light directed down toward the gaming surface. This reference teaches away from the present invention, indeed it teaches away from any gambling tracking system like the present invention, because it shines decorative light down upon the wagering locations. A downward angled light creates shadows on the lower chips and does not provide even illumination over the entire chip stack. The light fixture described by Walsh would not consistently illuminate (due to the angle to and distance from the betting circle) the entire image of the stack of chips wagered to eliminate shadowing effects, thus making the image bet recognition accuracy unusable.

The combination of Schubert and Walsh are distinct from the present invention for yet another reason. In the present invention, the lights are positioned below the platform and are directed toward the gaming locations, as are the imagers or cameras. The combination of Schubert and Walsh would eliminate this advantage of the invention, since the light of Walsh is directed down in an arced pattern on the gaming location, while the imagers and cameras of Schubert are located adjacent the dealer and are directed outwardly.

To clarify this distinction in the art, claim 1 has been amended to specify that a light below the platform is directed to each of the wagering locations, the light providing illumination projecting from the arcuate wall from below the platform laterally toward a predetermined gaming location. This feature of the present invention distinguishes it over the art, and thus claim 1, and therefore all the claims, should now be in condition for allowance.

The Examiner then rejected claims 6 and 7 as obvious over Schubert in view of Walsh, and further in view of Mothwurf. Since Mothwurf does not provide the lighting features of claim 1 as amended, which distinguishes the present invention over the art, among other features, Mothwurf cannot render the claims obvious and therefore claims 6 and 7 should also be allowable.

The Applicants assert that all claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request early allowance. If the Examiner believes that a phone conference would expedite this case to issue, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tim Cook
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 32,561

Browning Bushman P.C.
5718 Westheimer, Suite 1800
Houston, Texas 77057
(713) 266-5593
(713) 266-5169
tcook@browningbushman.com

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Amended three times) A computer implemented gambling tracking system comprising:

- a. a central computer;
- b. a video multiplexer coupled to the central computer;
- c. a gaming table associated with the video multiplexer;
- d. a plurality of video imagers on the gaming table, the video imagers coupled to the video multiplexer, and each of the plurality of video imagers directed to a predetermined wagering location on the table;
- e. a chip recognition system in the central computer to determine the value of the wagers in each of the wagering locations;
- f. a platform on the table above the predetermined wagering location wherein each of the plurality of video imagers is located below the platform;
- g. an arcuate wall extending between the platform and the table, the arcuate wall defining apertures therethrough, the video imagers positioned behind the arcuate wall and directed through the apertures; and
- h. a light below the platform and directed to each of the wagering locations, the light providing illumination projecting from the arcuate wall from below the platform laterally toward the gaming location.

Please add the following new claims:

- 17. The system of claim 1, wherein the light is underneath the platform. –

–18. The system of claim 1, wherein the table defines a substantially flat side and a arcuate side, and wherein the table further defines a dealer location along the substantially flat side and a plurality of gamer locations along the arcuate side. –

–19. The system of claim 18, wherein each of the plurality of video imagers is directed from a point adjacent one of the plurality of gamer locations generally in the direction of the dealer location.
–

–20. The system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined wagering location is adapted to support a stack of wagering chips, including a bottom chip, and wherein the light illuminates the stack of wagering chips, including the bottom chip. –